United Nations CEDAW/C/GAB/CO/6

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Gabon*

1. The Committee considered the sixth periodic report of Gabon (CEDAW/C/GAB/6) at its 1277th and 1278th meetings, on 17 February 2015 (see CEDAW/C/SR.1277 and 1278). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/GAB/Q/6 and the responses of Gabon are contained in CEDAW/C/GAB/Q/6/Add.1.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates that the State party submitted its sixth periodic report. It also appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre essional working group and welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party or its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Deputy Minister of Social Affairs, Marie Françoise Dikoumba, and included representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Gabon to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue that took place between the delegation and the Committee, although some questions were not fully answered.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the adoption, since its consideration in 2005 of the State party's combined second to fifth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/GAB/2-5), of the following:

(a) Act No. 21/2011 of 11 February 2012 on the overall direction of education, training and research;

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixtieth session (16 February-6 March 2015).

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(b) Act No. 38/2008 of 29 January 2009 aimed at combating and preventing female genital mutilation;

(c) Decree No. 0253/PR/MJGSDHRC of 19 June 2012 on the organization and functioning of legal aid offices.

5. The Committee also notes with appreciation the adoption of the following:

(a) National Gender Equality and Equity Strategy, aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and treatment of men and women with respect to education, vocational training, employment and occupation, in 2010;

(b) 2006-2015 National Policy on Health and Reproduction.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, since its consideration of the previous reports (CEDAW/C/GAB/2-5) in 2003, the State party has ratified the following international instruments:

(a) International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, in 2011;

(b) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2007.

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

National Assembly and Senate

7. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see the statement by the Committee on its relationship with parliamentarians, adopted at the forty-fifth session, in 2010). It invites the National Assembly and the Senate, in line with their mandates, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention.**

Visibility of the Convention

8. The Committee notes that the State party has a monist legal system in which, in principle, provisions of the Convention may be directly applied in the national courts. The Committee is concerned, however, that the application of the Convention has been limited in practice and that the Convention has not been given sufficient visibility as a legal basis for measures for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the promotion of gender equality in the State party.

9. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations are sufficiently known and applied by all branches of the Government, the parliament and the judiciary as a framework for all laws, court decisions and policies on gender equality and the advancement of women.**

Legislative framework

10. The Committee is concerned about the lack of harmonization of national legislation with the Convention, which should take precedence over national laws

given the many discriminatory provisions contained in ordinary law and the persistence of discriminatory customary laws and practices. In particular, it is concerned about the continued existence of discriminatory provisions in the Civil Code, the Labour Code and the Penal Code and the long delays in revising such provisions, the persistence of discriminatory provisions in pending bills and the absence of a law on violence against women.

11. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Finalize, as a priority and within a clear time frame, the process of legislative reform, including the revision of the Civil Code and the Labour Code, and amend other legislation, including the Penal Code, with a view to bringing the legislation into conformity with the Convention and ensuring that all discriminatory provisions are repealed;**

(b) **Enact, without delay, a comprehensive law on violence against women;**

(c) **Ensure consultations with civil society during the drafting of new legal provisions to eliminate discrimination against women;**

(d) **Strengthen campaigns to raise awareness among local and traditional leaders and the population in general, especially in rural areas, of the negative effects of discriminatory customary laws;**

(e) **Consider ratifying the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.**

Definition of discrimination against women

12. The Committee notes that article 2 of the Constitution guarantees equality before the law to all citizens without distinction, including on the basis of sex. It is concerned, however, that the Constitution and national legislation lack an explicit definition of discrimination in accordance with article 1 of the Convention, as well as provisions on the equal rights of women in line with article 2 (a) of the Convention.

13. **The Committee recommends that the State party include in its Constitution or other appropriate legislation an explicit definition of discrimination in line with article 1 of the Convention addressing direct and indirect discrimination and discrimination in the private sphere, in addition to provisions on the equal rights of women in line with article 2 (a).**

Access to justice

14. The Committee welcomes the adoption of a decree on the organization and functioning of legal aid offices. It also welcomes the measures taken by the State party to raise awareness among women of their right of access to justice. It is concerned, however, about persistent barriers faced by women in gaining effective access to justice, including legal illiteracy, the cost of legal procedures, sociocultural barriers and the limited number of judicial structures in rural areas.

15. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen the measures taken to provide free legal aid to women without sufficient means;**

(b) Combat sociocultural barriers that women may face in gaining access to justice, including by enhancing women's awareness of their rights and the means to enforce those rights;

(c) Take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations are made an integral part of training for judges, lawyers, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officers;

(d) Increase the number of judicial structures in rural areas.

National machinery for the advancement of women

16. The Committee welcomes the adoption, in 2010, of the National Gender Equality and Equity Strategy, which is aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and treatment between men and women with respect to education, vocational training, employment and occupation. It also notes with appreciation the establishment, in 2011, of the National Commission on Human Rights. It remains concerned, however, about:

(a) The limited budget allocated to the national machinery for the advancement of women and to development and poverty eradication; the existence of social indicators for the State party comparable to those of low-income countries despite a gross per capita income that places the State party among medium-income countries; and the limited impact of anti-corruption measures;

(b) The low representation of women at the decision-making and policymaking levels in national and local development institutions and structures;

(c) The lack of sex-disaggregated data necessary to assess the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes aimed at promoting women's enjoyment of their human rights on an equal basis with men;

(d) The fact that the National Commission on Human Rights has not yet applied for accreditation by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

17. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Review the distribution of State resources to significantly increase the proportion allocated to the advancement of women, sustainable development and poverty eradication;

(b) Strengthen anti-corruption measures;

(c) Establish a permanent national machinery for the advancement of women, with a clear mandate and adequate human and financial resources, which would be responsible for the promotion and protection of women's rights and for combating any form of discrimination against women, and, in the interim, significantly strengthen the financial, human and technical resources of the existing national machinery to ensure its effective functioning;

(d) Strengthen the capacity of machinery staff to address the advancement of women and enhance their cooperation with civil society;

(e) Promote gender mainstreaming throughout all government bodies;

(f) Incorporate a results-oriented approach, including specific indicators and targets, into the National Gender Equality and Equity Strategy and into future strategies for the advancement of women, and establish a monitoring mechanism to regularly assess their impact and effectiveness;

(g) Increase the representation of women at the decision-making and policymaking levels, including in national and local development institutions and structures;

(h) Develop a comprehensive system of gender indicators to improve the collection of sex-disaggregated data necessary to assess the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes aimed at promoting women's enjoyment of their human rights on an equal basis with men. In this regard, the Committee draws the State party's attention to the Committee's general recommendation No. 9 on statistical data concerning the situation of women and encourages the State party to seek technical assistance from United Nations agencies and to enhance its collaboration with women's organizations that could assist in gathering accurate data;

(i) Encourage the National Commission on Human Rights to apply, without delay, for accreditation by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and ensure that it complies with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

Temporary special measures

18. The Committee notes with appreciation the political declarations made by representatives of the State party on increasing the representation of women in political life and in decision-making bodies. It is concerned, however, that no temporary special measures have been introduced as part of a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between women and men in all areas covered by the Convention in which women are underrepresented or disadvantaged.

19. **The Committee encourages the State party to use temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 on the subject, as a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between women and men in all areas covered by the Convention in which women are underrepresented or disadvantaged. To that end, it recommends that the State party:**

(a) Implement temporary special measures in various forms, such as outreach and support programmes, quotas and other proactive and result-oriented measures aimed at achieving substantive equality between women and men in all areas covered by the Convention in which women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, and encourage their use in both the public and private sectors;

(b) Raise awareness among parliamentarians, government officials, employers and the general public of the need for temporary special measures.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

20. The Committee welcomes the adoption of Act No. 38/2008 of 29 January 2009 aimed at combating and preventing female genital mutilation. It also welcomes the measures taken to raise awareness about the harmful effects of widowhood practices and levirate and to tackle gender stereotypes in the media. The Committee is concerned, however, at the persistence of adverse cultural norms, practices and traditions and patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in the family and society. It notes that stereotypes contribute to the persistence of violence against women and to harmful practices, including female genital mutilation, child marriage, widowhood practices, levirate and ritual crimes. The Committee is also concerned that the State party has not taken sufficient sustained and systematic action to modify or eliminate stereotypes, negative cultural values and harmful practices.

21. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure the effective implementation of Act No. 38/2008 aimed at combating and preventing female genital mutilation;**

(b) **Adopt legal provisions prohibiting child marriage, widowhood practices, levirate and ritual crimes and include adequate sanctions for violations of those provisions;**

(c) **Put in place a comprehensive strategy, in conformity with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention, to eliminate stereotypes and harmful practices that discriminate against women, such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, widowhood practices, levirate and ritual crimes. Such measures should include concerted efforts, within a clear time frame, in collaboration with civil society, the education system, the media and traditional leaders, to educate and raise awareness among women and girls as well as men and boys at all levels of society about negative gender stereotypes;**

(d) **Regularly monitor the measures taken in order to identify shortcomings and improve them accordingly within a clear time frame.**

Violence against women

22. The Committee welcomes the continuing study on violence against women and the establishment of a helpline for women who are victims of violence. It is concerned, however, about:

(a) The prevalence of violence against women, including rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence and marital rape;

(b) The absence of a national strategy and a specific law on violence against women and of legal provisions explicitly criminalizing marital rape;

(c) The limited medical, psychological and legal assistance provided to women who are victims of violence and the absence of shelters;

(d) The limited training for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and health and social workers on issues relating to violence against women;

(e) The absence of data on prosecution and conviction rates in relation to violence against women.

23. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To adopt a comprehensive law on violence against women that prohibits and introduces adequate sanctions for rape, including marital rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence;**

(b) **To adopt a comprehensive strategy against gender-based violence;**

(c) **To ensure effective access for women who are victims of violence to courts and tribunals, prosecute all acts of violence against women upon complaint by the victim or ex officio, and adequately punish perpetrators;**

(d) **To strengthen victim assistance and rehabilitation through the establishment of a comprehensive care system for women who are victims of violence, including measures to provide them with legal aid, medical and psychological support, shelters, counselling and rehabilitation services;**

(e) **To undertake awareness-raising and educational activities, targeted at both men and women, including mandatory training for judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officers and health-care and social workers, with support from civil society organizations, with a view to eliminating violence against women;**

(f) **To develop a system for the regular collection of statistical data on violence against women, disaggregated by age, type of offence and the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator; the number of complaints, prosecutions and convictions in relation to violence against women; and the sentences imposed on perpetrators of violence against women.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

24. While recalling the adoption in 2004 of Act No. 09/04 on preventing and combating trafficking in children, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of data on the extent of trafficking in women and girls to, from and through the State party;

(b) Reports on cases of trafficking in women and girls for purposes of domestic servitude, forced and servile marriage, forced begging and sexual exploitation and prostitution;

(c) The absence of a law and strategy aimed at combating trafficking;

(d) The lack of targeted programmes to encourage women engaged in prostitution who are exposed to discrimination and exploitation to leave prostitution.

25. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Carry out a study on the prevalence of trafficking in women and girls and prostitution in the State party to inform the development of a strategy to combat trafficking in women and girls and their forced prostitution and to address the root causes, including poverty, and a law aimed at preventing and combating trafficking and establishing mechanisms for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of traffickers;**

(b) Tackle, as a priority, the issue of trafficking in women and girls for purposes of domestic servitude, forced and servile marriage, forced begging, sexual exploitation and prostitution;

(c) Consider ratifying the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization;

(d) Strengthen international, regional and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination to prevent trafficking through information exchange and harmonize legal procedures aimed at the prosecution and punishment of traffickers;

(e) Collect data on women in prostitution, develop programmes aimed at addressing prostitution, including exit programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution, and reduce the demand for prostitution.

Participation in political and public life

26. The Committee welcomes the political engagement for an increase in the representation of women in political life and in decision-making bodies, as well as the pending bill on the establishment of quotas for the representation of women in the parliament. It is concerned, however, about the continued low participation of women in all areas of political and public life.

27. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Promote the equal representation of women in political and public life at the national, provincial and local levels, including in decision-making positions in the Government, the parliament and the judiciary, the civil and foreign services and in diplomacy;

(b) Adopt temporary special measures, such as statutory quotas and incentives for political parties to nominate women candidates, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 on the subject, to increase the representation of women in political and public life and in decision-making positions;

(c) Conduct activities to raise the awareness of the general public about the importance of the participation of women in decision-making and develop targeted training and mentoring programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for current and potential women candidates and women holding public office.

Nationality

28. The Committee welcomes the measures taken and planned to increase birth registration rates, but is concerned that 11 per cent of children are still not registered in the State party and that parents continue to face obstacles to birth registration, including complex procedures and related indirect costs. The Committee is concerned that the situation may place children at risk of becoming stateless, prevent them from gaining access to education or health-care services and from claiming social benefits and have a negative impact on the legal status of women.

29. **The Committee recommends that the State party continue its efforts to ensure that all girls and boys are registered. To that end, it recommends that**

the State party expedite and facilitate procedures for birth registration, ensure that there are no indirect costs and establish specific goals and timetables for the process.

Education

30. The Committee welcomes the adoption of Act No. 21/2011 of 11 February 2012 on the overall direction of education, training and research, which provides for compulsory education up to 16 years of age. It also welcomes the very high primary education enrolment rates, including of girls, the measures taken to encourage the re-entry of young women into the education system after giving birth and the increase in the literacy rate among young women. It remains concerned, however, about:

(a) The very high dropout rate at the primary and secondary levels of education, including among girls owing to, among other things, teenage pregnancies;

(b) The low enrolment rates of girls at the tertiary level of education and the underrepresentation of girls in fields of study that are traditionally dominated by men, such as in science and technology;

(c) The prevalence of sexual violence against and sexual harassment of girls at school;

(d) The disproportionately high illiteracy rate, in particular among rural women;

(e) The lack of information on measures taken to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes from textbooks.

31. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen its programmes to retain girls in school, including existing programmes that provide scholarships to female pupils and enable young women to return to school after giving birth;**

(b) **Encourage women and men to choose non-traditional fields of education and careers;**

(c) **Strengthen the integration of age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health and rights education into school curricula at all levels of education;**

(d) **Enforce a zero-tolerance policy with respect to sexual violence and sexual harassment at school and ensure that perpetrators are punished appropriately;**

(e) **Strengthen efforts to increase the literacy rate among women, in particular in rural areas;**

(f) **Revise textbooks to eliminate gender stereotypes.**

Employment

32. The Committee welcomes the continuing revision of the Labour Code, but is concerned about:

(a) The high unemployment rate among women and the concentration of women in the informal sector without legal and social protection and benefits;

(b) The occupational segregation of women and men and the persistent gender wage gap;

(c) Information received that the draft revised Labour Code contains a restrictive definition of sexual harassment in the workplace that omits conduct that creates a hostile working environment.

33. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt programmes aimed at reducing the unemployment rate among women, given that employment of women is a factor in development and efforts to combat poverty;**

(b) **Consider extending social protection to women and men working in the informal sector, and promote access by women to employment in the formal sector through, among other things, the provision of vocational and technical training;**

(c) **Reduce the gender wage gap, including by addressing the occupational segregation of women and applying the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;**

(d) **Broaden the definition of sexual harassment in the draft revised Labour Code to include conduct that creates a hostile working environment and adopt legal provisions that require employers to prevent sexual harassment and provide additional avenues for redress to victims of sexual harassment and adequate sanctions, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women.**

Health

34. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the 2006-2015 National Policy on Health and Reproduction, the 2011-2015 National Plan for Sanitary Development and the 2008-2015 National Strategic Plan to Combat HIV/AIDS. It also welcomes the existence of universal health insurance, the measures taken to reduce maternal and child mortality, the increase in the coverage of prenatal care and the development of programmes to improve maternal health and access by women to health-care services. The Committee is concerned, however, about:

(a) The persistently high rates of maternal mortality and cervical cancer;

(b) The lack of adequate health infrastructure, insufficient human and financial resources allocated to health-care centres and the frequent shortage of medicines in basic health-care facilities, in particular in rural areas;

(c) The limited availability of comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health and rights and family planning services, the low use of modern contraceptives and the high rate of teenage pregnancy;

(d) The restrictive conditions under which abortion is legally available, i.e., only in cases of threats to the life of a pregnant woman, excluding other circumstances such as threats to her health, rape, incest and serious malformation of the foetus;

(e) The disproportionately high number of women living with HIV/AIDS, the high rate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and the limited availability of HIV/AIDS-related services, including antiretroviral treatment, especially in rural areas.

35. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen the measures taken to reduce the maternal mortality rate and prevent cervical cancer;**

(b) **Increase access for women and girls, in particular rural women, to basic health-care services, including by increasing the funding allocated to health care, the number of health-care facilities in rural areas, the provision of medicines in health-care centres and the number of trained health-care providers;**

(c) **Strengthen measures to widely promote education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including by conducting awareness-raising campaigns about modern contraceptive methods, increase access to safe and affordable contraceptives throughout the State party and reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy;**

(d) **Ensure that abortion is legally available not only in cases of threats to the life of the pregnant woman but also in other circumstances, such as threats to her health, rape, incest and serious malformation of the foetus;**

(e) **Intensify measures to reduce the disproportionately high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women and mother-to-child transmission.**

Rural women

36. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to facilitate access by women to microcredit and the adoption of the document setting forth the strategy on growth and poverty reduction The Committee is concerned, however, about:

(a) The precarious situation of rural women, who are disproportionately affected by the lack of participation in decision-making processes and of adequate health services, education, public transportation, nutrition, water, sanitation, economic opportunities and social benefits;

(b) Barriers faced by rural women in the acquisition of land owing to discriminatory customary laws;

(c) Limited income-generating opportunities for rural women.

37. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Pay special attention to the needs of rural women and ensure that they can participate in decision-making processes, including community decision-making processes and development planning in rural areas; ensure that they have equal access to basic services and infrastructure, including health services, education, public transportation, nutrition, water, sanitation and economic opportunities on an equal basis with men and also with their urban counterparts, including through the adoption of temporary special**

measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 on the subject;

(b) **Take measures to address cultural barriers that restrict women's access to land;**

(c) **Expand women's access to microcredit at low interest rates so as to enable them to engage in income-generating activities and to start their own businesses;**

(d) **Consider developing the use of modern communications technology to address the isolation of the rural population, including women, and to facilitate development.**

Economic empowerment of women

38. The Committee is deeply concerned that, while the State party is one of the richest countries in the region, about 80 per cent of the population, including women, lives below the poverty line and one third lives in extreme poverty.

39. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Review the distribution of State resources to provide the necessary financing to programmes for sustainable development and poverty eradication and integrate a gender perspective into those programmes;**

(b) **Ensure that the strategy on growth and poverty reduction is effectively implemented and that issues relating to gender equality are sufficiently reflected therein.**

Disadvantaged groups of women

40. The Committee is concerned at the lack of disaggregated data on the challenges faced in the enjoyment of their rights under the Convention by disadvantaged groups of women, including internally displaced women, refugees, girls living on the streets, older women, women with disabilities, widows, migrant workers, prisoners and women living in poverty.

41. **The Committee calls upon the State party to gather disaggregated data on the status of disadvantaged groups of women, including refugees, girls living on the streets, older women, women with disabilities, widows, migrant workers, prisoners and women living in poverty, focusing on the intersecting forms of discrimination that they encounter and paying special attention to their needs to ensure that they enjoy equal access to basic services.**

42. The Committee is concerned about the numerous cases of sexual violence against indigenous women perpetrated by members of the Bantu community; the persistence of the practice of enslaving indigenous people, including women and girls; the discrimination against indigenous women and men as regards access to health care, education and birth registration; and the obstacles faced by indigenous people to living in their ancestral lands.

43. **The Committee urges the State party to put an end to sexual violence against indigenous women and the practice of enslaving indigenous people, including by prosecuting and punishing perpetrators, and ensure that indigenous people, including women, have non-discriminatory access to**

education, health care and birth registration and unobstructed access to their ancestral lands.

Marriage and family relations

44. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The long delay, since 1997, in finalizing revisions to the discriminatory provisions relating to marriage and family relations in the Civil Code and the persistence of discriminatory provisions in pending bills;

(b) The existence in the Civil Code of numerous discriminatory provisions, including those relating to polygamy, the lower minimum age of marriage for girls compared with boys, the difference in spousal obligations, the husband's role as the head of household, the choice of residence being solely that of the husband and his right to forbid his wife to continue to work, the practice of repudiation and the administration of family property solely by the husband;

(c) The existence in the Penal Code of provisions on sanctions that are applied only to women in cases of adultery and of less punitive sanctions for men compared with women for killings motivated by adultery;

(d) The high number of women married only under unregistered customary law, who are denied economic protection upon dissolution of their unrecognized marriage, in particular with regard to their rights to inheritance;

(e) The persistent practices of polygamy and child and early marriage.

45. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Review, as a priority and within a clear time frame, existing discriminatory provisions relating to marriage and family relations in order to bring them fully into line with articles 2 and 16 of the Convention. To that effect, the State party should:**

(i) **Repeal without delay all discriminatory provisions relating to marriage and family relations in the Civil Code, including those relating to polygamy (arts. 177 and 178), the lower minimum age of marriage for girls compared to boys (art. 203), differences in spousal obligations (art. 252), the husband's role as the head of household (art. 253), the choice of residence being solely that of the husband (art. 254) and his right to forbid his wife to continue to work (art. 261), the practice of repudiation (art. 265) and the administration of family property solely by the husband (art. 335);**

(ii) **Raise the legal minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 years so that it is equal to that for boys and adopt legal provisions that prohibit polygamy, levirate, widowhood rites and child and early marriage;**

(iii) **Review all discriminatory provisions of the Penal Code, repeal sanctions that are applied only to women in cases of adultery (art. 267) and provide equal sanctions for men and women in relation to killings motivated by adultery (art. 54);**

(b) Adopt all legislative means necessary to protect the rights of women upon dissolution of customary marriages, regardless of their registration status, in particular with respect to their inheritance rights.

Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

46. **The Committee encourages the State party to accept, as soon as possible, the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.**

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

47. **The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.**

Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development framework

48. **The Committee calls for the integration of a gender perspective, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, into all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and into the post-2015 development framework.**

Dissemination

49. **The Committee recalls the obligation of the State party to systematically and continuously implement the provisions of the Convention. It urges the State party to give priority attention to the implementation of the present concluding observations and recommendations between now and the submission of the next periodic report. The Committee therefore requests that the present concluding observations be disseminated in a timely manner, in the official language of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the National Assembly and the Senate and the judiciary, so as to enable their full implementation. It encourages the State party to collaborate with all stakeholders concerned, such as employers' associations, trade unions, human rights and women's organizations, universities, research institutions and the media. It further recommends that its concluding observations be disseminated in an appropriate form at the local community level so as to enable their implementation. In addition, the Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and relevant jurisprudence, in addition to the Committee's general recommendations, to all stakeholders.**

Technical assistance

50. **The Committee recommends that the State party link the implementation of the Convention to its development efforts and that it avail itself of regional or international technical assistance in this respect, including through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.**

Ratification of other treaties

51. **The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments[1] would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to consider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, to which it is not yet a party.**

Follow-up to the concluding observations

52. **The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 11 (a) and 17 (a) and (b).**

Preparation of the next report

53. **The Committee invites the State party to submit its seventh periodic report in March 2019.**

54. **The Committee requests the State party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I).**

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[1] The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.